United Nations S/2016/803

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 September 2016

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 21 May to 29 August 2016

I. Introduction

1. The present report gives an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) during the past three months, pursuant to the mandate contained in Security Council resolution 350 (1974) and extended in subsequent resolutions, most recently resolution 2294 (2016).

II. Situation in the area of operation and activities of the Force

2. During the reporting period, the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic was maintained, albeit in a continuously volatile environment attributable to the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and notwithstanding a significant number of violations of the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces (Disengagement of Forces Agreement) of 1974, which are set out below. The Syrian Arab Armed Forces and non-State armed opposition groups engaged in exchanges of heavy weapon fire in the area of separation and the area of limitation. Different armed groups, including the listed terrorist group Nusrah Front,[1] Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade, which pledged allegiance to Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, continued to exchange fire in the UNDOF area of operation. Inside the area of separation, the presence of the Syrian armed forces and military equipment, as well as any other armed personnel and military equipment other than that of UNDOF, is in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. As underscored by the Security Council in its resolution 2294 (2016), there should be no military activity of any kind in the area of separation.

3. In employing its best efforts to maintain the ceasefire and see that it is scrupulously observed, as prescribed in the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, UNDOF reports all breaches of the ceasefire line. All incidents of firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line, as well as the crossing by individuals of the ceasefire line, are violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. In his regular interaction with both sides, the Force Commander continued to call upon

[1] In July, the Nusrah Front announced that it had changed its name to Jabhat Fath al-Sham and declared that it had cut ties with Al-Qaida.

Please recycle

both parties to exercise restraint and prevent any miscalculations that might lead to an escalation of the situation across the ceasefire line.

4. A number of incidents of note occurred across the ceasefire line in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. On 3 July, the Israel Defense Forces informed UNDOF that a high explosive mortar round from the Bravo side had impacted and damaged the Israeli technical fence, west of the ceasefire line, approximately one kilometre from United Nations position 22. United Nations personnel at position 22 had reported an explosion in the general area indicated by the Israel Defense Forces but did not observe the impact or direction from which the fire originated. The Israel Defense Forces also informed UNDOF that they had fired on positions of the Syrian armed forces on the Bravo side as a response to the spillover fire. UNDOF investigated the alleged site of the impact on the Alpha side and confirmed that the Israeli technical fence had been damaged by indirect fire.

5. On 5 July, the Israel Defense Forces informed UNDOF that Israel Defense Forces soldiers had observed a canon in the area of separation firing onto the Alpha side two kilometres from United Nations observation post 73. Later that day, the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate informed UNDOF that an Israeli aircraft had flown across the ceasefire line and fired a missile onto a location in the vicinity of Ba'th in the area of separation. At the time of the alleged air strike, United Nations personnel reported hearing one heavy detonation in the vicinity of Ba'th, but did not observe any air activity. The Israel Defense Forces denied having conducted any strikes on the Bravo side.

6. On 17 July, UNDOF observed two jets from the Alpha side flying across the ceasefire line and over Qunaytirah in the area of separation and subsequently flying back to the Alpha side. The Israel Defense Forces informed UNDOF that they had flown the jets across the ceasefire line in response to an unmanned aerial vehicle from the Bravo side that had crossed the ceasefire line. Open sources reported that the unmanned aerial vehicle had reportedly returned to the Bravo side. UNDOF was not able to confirm reports of an unmanned aerial vehicle or of missile activity across the ceasefire line, but indicated that it had observed explosions in the 10-kilometre zone of the area of limitation on the Alpha side.

7. On 25 July, United Nations personnel observed two large explosions in the vicinity of Ba'th. Shortly thereafter, the Israel Defense Forces informed UNDOF that in response to two mortar rounds from the Bravo side that had spilled over onto the Alpha side, the Israel Defense Forces had fired at a location on the outskirts of Ba'th alleged to be the point of origin of the mortar rounds. The Senior Syrian Arab Delegate informed UNDOF that an Israel Defense Forces strike had targeted a position of the Syrian armed forces in Ba'th. UNDOF initiated an investigation of the alleged mortar impact on the Alpha side. Although an immediate investigation was not possible due to the security concerns of the Israel Defense Forces about the area, on 1 August, the Israel Defense Forces granted UNDOF access to the area along the Israeli technical fence patrol road, 800 metres from the reported point of impact of the mortars. No craters were identified on either side of the patrol road. UNDOF was not able to confirm the impact of the reported mortar rounds on the Alpha side. Throughout the site visit by the UNDOF investigation team, two armed men from the Bravo side observed the UNDOF personnel. A single rifle shot was heard during that period. The conduct of the investigation was limited by the presence of a minefield and the risk to United Nations personnel posed by the presence of the armed

personnel on the Bravo side. The UNDOF Force Commander urged the Israel Defense Forces to ensure facilitation of a prompt investigation in order to verify incidents.

8. On 22 August, the Israel Defense Forces informed UNDOF that a mortar round from a location in the general area of Ba'th in the area of separation had impacted the Alpha side and that, in response, the Israel Defense Forces had carried out an air strike from an unmanned aerial vehicle on the location of the origin of the mortar round. The Senior Syrian Arab Delegate confirmed to UNDOF that the Israel Defense Forces had carried out an air strike on a location in Ba'th. On 23 August, UNDOF initiated an investigation. The Israel Defense Forces facilitated the UNDOF investigation team's access to the technical fence road but the team was unable to reach and examine the reported location of the mortar impact as it is located in an Israel Defense Forces minefield. The UNDOF team therefore was unable to find any evidence that might suggest the calibre, direction or impact of the mortar round.

9. Crossing of the ceasefire line by civilians, primarily shepherds, from the Bravo side to the Alpha side was observed on an almost daily basis. On a number of occasions, United Nations personnel observed instances of interaction between Israel Defense Forces soldiers and individuals from the Bravo side. On 22 and 23 June, 7 and 27 July and 3 August, UNDOF personnel at United Nations position Hermon South observed interaction at Israel Defense Forces positions on Mount Hermon between Israel Defense Forces personnel and groups of individuals from the Bravo side. On several occasions, UNDOF assessed that the interaction appeared to involve transfer of injured individuals to the Israel Defense Forces. On one occasion, UNDOF observed unarmed individuals on mules in front of an Israel Defense Forces position retrieving six bags from that location and the individuals subsequently moving to the Bravo side.

10. Further south, United Nations personnel at observation post 54 on 1 and 29 June observed Israel Defense Forces vehicles moving from the Alpha side to the ceasefire line where Israel Defense Forces personnel disembarked the vehicles and unloaded items immediately east of the ceasefire line and thereafter returning to the Alpha side. Several individuals in trucks from the Bravo side subsequently arrived at the location where the items had been left and loaded the items on the trucks and drove off in an easterly direction. On 14 July, United Nations personnel at observation post 55 observed individuals from the Bravo side at the Israeli technical fence handing over an injured individual to Israel Defense Forces personnel.

11. In the context of the Syrian conflict, the exchange of gunfire between Syrian armed forces and armed groups continued with varying degrees of intensity in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side. The Syrian armed forces maintained their positions, particularly around Ba'th and Khan Arnabah, Hadar, and east of the tri-village area of Jubbata al-Khashab, Turunjah and Ufaniyah. In the northern part of the areas of separation and limitation, the exchange of heavy machine gun fire between the Syrian armed forces and armed groups and heavy explosions occurred particularly in the vicinity of Hadar, Harfa, Bayt Jinn, Mazra'at Bayt Jinn and vacated United Nations position 17. On 30 May, UNDOF observed air strikes in the vicinity of Bayt Jinn in the area of limitation. The second half of July saw a return to low-level clashes in the northern part of the area of separation. On several occasions, United Nations personnel at position 12 and Hermon South observed and heard small arms firing in June, July and August. Further north, in the

border area between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, UNDOF observed, on an almost daily basis, several incidents of transborder movements of unidentified mostly unarmed individuals. The incidents of firing on Mount Hermon coincided with several transborder crossings into Lebanon and interaction between individuals from the Bravo side and Israel Defense Forces personnel across the ceasefire line. Recent weeks have seen a return to low-level clashes in the northern part of the area of separation.

12. In the central parts of the area of separation, United Nations personnel observed intermittent exchanges of heavy machine gun fire, heavy explosions and detonations, in particular between armed elements in Ba'th and Hamadiyah al-Jadidah but also in the vicinity of Qunaytirah, Qahtaniyah, Samdaniyah al-Gharbiyah, Jaba and Umm Batinah. The intensity of the firing increased towards late July and early August.

13. In the southern parts of the areas of separation and limitation, which remain for the most part under the control of non-State armed groups, UNDOF observed a high level of explosions and exchanges of heavy machine gun fire between different armed groups. Open sources reported fighting between a coalition of armed groups, including the Nusrah Front, against the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade and the Muthanna movement, under the common umbrella named Jaysh Khalid ibn al-Walid. UNDOF observed numerous explosions and exchanges of heavy machine gun fire in Ayn Dhakrah, Abu Hasar, Abu Harten, and Bakr in the area of limitation. The intensity of the firing decreased in late July and early August.

14. During the reporting period, there were a number of incidents of firing in the central part of the area of separation that jeopardized United Nations positions and personnel. On two occasions on 22 May, and on 10 and 11 August, United Nations personnel at position 22 and United Nations personnel at observation post 51 were forced to go into shelter as a result of firing in the vicinity of the positions.

15. Throughout the reporting period, the Syrian armed forces maintained their positions in the area of separation, in particular in Ba'th, Khan Arnabah and Hadar, as well as along the main road connecting Qunaytirah to Damascus, and generally deployed tanks at locations adjacent to the area of separation. On several occasions UNDOF observed non-State armed groups using and transporting tanks and artillery pieces in the area of separation. In addition, the Syrian armed forces maintained a presence at vacated United Nations positions 25 and 32 and observation post 72. UNDOF observed incidents of firing in the vicinity of vacated United Nations position 10 and observation post 71. On 8 June, UNDOF observed two tanks at a permanent Israel Defense Forces position inside the area of separation at Sabina and protested to the Israel Defense Forces. UNDOF has not observed the tanks in that location again.

16. UNDOF protested all violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement to both parties, including the presence of unauthorized equipment in the area of separation and firing into the area of separation. The Force Commander reminded the parties of their obligation to abide by the terms of the Agreement and to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground.

17. On two occasions, UNDOF observed armed and unarmed persons on the Bravo side unearthing and removing mines in close proximity to United Nations positions. On 27 July, United Nations personnel at observation post 54 observed two

persons unearthing nine anti-personnel mines and removing the detonators, after which the persons concealed the mines under rocks. Four armed persons from the Bravo side were observed on 9 August collecting and defusing approximately 40 anti-personnel mines across the ceasefire line close to observation post 54.

18. UNDOF observed five locations where tents and other structures had been set up for internally displaced persons in the area of separation and in proximity to that area. Approximately 70 tents north-west of Aishah village, straddling the ceasefire line close to United Nations position 80, were dismantled at the beginning of June. The camp east of Burayqah village increased from 155 to almost 200 tents. Additional tents were erected in the camp one kilometre east of position 80 on the outskirts of Rafid. A further six tents were observed at a location straddling the Bravo line north-west of the village of Ayn al-Qadi. UNDOF observed water tanks and limited infrastructure in the vicinity of the tents. Small numbers of civilians were observed intermittently in the camp. Owing to the closure of the established crossing point at Qunaytirah between the Alpha and Bravo sides since late August 2014, UNDOF is not in a position to facilitate, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, humanitarian crossings, including for students, between the two sides.

19. Since its temporary relocation from a number of positions in September 2014 and pending its full return to the area of separation, UNDOF has continued to maintain visibility, albeit in a modified manner, of the area of separation and the ceasefire line from its positions on Mount Hermon, position 80 in the southern part of the area of separation and position 22 on the Alpha side. UNDOF operations continued to be supported by United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) military observers in Observer Group Golan, who maintained five fixed and four temporary observation posts along the Alpha line. The focus of the activities of Observer Group Golan was on continuous static observation and situational awareness. On 7 August, Observer Group Golan redeployed military observers to the UNDOF temporary headquarters in Damascus, with a view to resuming operations and enhancing observation from Mount Hermon of the northern part of the area of separation and limitation. Through Observer Group Golan, UNDOF continued to carry out fortnightly inspections of equipment and force levels in the area of limitation on the Alpha side. Liaison officers from the Alpha side accompanied the inspection teams. Inspections in the area of limitation on the Bravo side remained suspended because of the security situation. As in the past, UNDOF faced some restrictions on its freedom of movement, and its inspection teams were denied access to some positions on the Alpha side. Engagement between UNDOF and the Israel Defense Forces helped to reduce the delays and challenges experienced by United Nations personnel in crossing through the technical fence to United Nations observation posts 54 and 73 and position 80.

20. During the reporting period, United Nations personnel observed 155 mm artillery weapons on a number of occasions on the Alpha side within 10 kilometres of the ceasefire line, in Israel Defense Forces positions and flatbed trucks. On two occasions in June and July, a missile carrier was deployed at an Israel Defense Forces position. On 23 July, UNDOF personnel observed four multiple-rocket launching systems at an Israel Defense Forces position within the 20 kilometre zone in the area of limitation. Between 26 and 31 July, three multiple-launch rocket systems remained at that position. On 2 August, nine multiple-rocket launching systems were stationed at a nearby location to the Israel Defense Forces position. In

addition, on 11 August, two Iron Dome systems were observed at different Israel Defense Forces positions in the area of limitation.

21. UNDOF, in consultation with both parties, continued to review the situation in the area of separation to assess whether the conditions on the ground permitted an incremental return to vacated positions in the area of separation, commencing with a limited return to Camp Faouar. The ultimate objective for UNDOF is to return fully to the area of separation, conditions permitting. In recent months, UNDOF assessed that, although the situation in the area of separation remained volatile, the security situation in the northern part had improved and was conducive to the Force's return, in a limited manner, to Camp Faouar. In keeping with the intent to return to Camp Faouar, UNDOF personnel carried out further fact-finding missions, on 3, 13 and 14 June and on 14 July and 4 August, to vacated United Nations positions 10, 16, 25, 31 and 32 and observation posts 71 and 72 in the northern part of the area of separation and to Camp Faouar in the area of limitation on the Bravo side. There were no security incidents experienced along the routes taken by UNDOF personnel to those United Nations facilities or at the United Nations facilities visited. UNDOF personnel found the security situation calm. UNDOF personnel assessed that since the United Nations positions had sustained significant damage and showed signs of looting, repairs and reconstruction would need to be undertaken prior to the eventual return to the visited positions.

22. UNDOF continued with work to move forward its planned limited return to Camp Faouar, following consideration of the security, military and logistics/support requirements for such a return. Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic have reiterated their commitment to assisting UNDOF in its plans to establish a greater presence on the Bravo side, starting with a return to Camp Faouar, and to increasing its operations in the area of separation, conditions permitting. In principle, the parties agreed to the establishment of temporary crossing procedures between the Alpha and Bravo sides for UNDOF personnel, when and if needed, to facilitate their movement between the two sides.

23. The development and preparation of Camp Faouar is a prerequisite for any return to the area of separation and will be undertaken in three phases. The first phase, which is to commence in the near future, consists of the demining and preliminary cleaning of the Camp by contractors and the establishment of a temporary crossing point between the Alpha and Bravo sides. The second phase will entail work on the Camp facilities, including the construction of basic troop accommodations and the implementation of force protection measures. A military company-sized guard force equipped with armoured personnel vehicles will provide security. The third phase will involve the generation of an additional mechanized company to be deployed to Camp Faouar for force protection and the completion of works at the Camp.

24. The agreement of the parties with regard to the use by UNDOF of technology, including technological enablers to enhance observation and monitoring of the area of separation and the ceasefire line and capabilities to enhance force protection, is essential. UNDOF continued to engage with the parties in that regard. It remains important that UNDOF possess the appropriate force protection capabilities to increase its operations on the Bravo side.

25. UNDOF continued to resupply its positions on Mount Hermon from Damascus. UNDOF convoys between Damascus and the Mount Hermon positions

are conducted almost daily and with an UNDOF security escort, accompanied by a liaison officer from the office of the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate. UNDOF continued to carry out contingency planning for the reinforcement and evacuation of United Nations positions and observation posts and to update its contingency planning for the relocation and evacuation of United Nations personnel on both the Alpha and Bravo sides, as well as in Damascus. UNDOF, through its Force Reserve Company, conducted regular rehearsals, exercises and training for all identified contingencies. UNDOF and the Observer Group Golan continued regular evacuation and reinforcement exercises and contingency planning.

26. The implementation of risk mitigation, including force protection measures recommended in the military capability study of UNDOF, continued at observation posts, positions and the operational base at Camp Ziouani. The Secretariat has made progress in the generation of the appropriate capabilities, including additional medical facilities, explosive ordnance disposal teams and additional protected mobility for Mount Hermon positions and position 80. Additional force protection measures, including defensive positions and newly constructed force protection barriers, have commenced at United Nations positions 12A and 22. The UNDOF main headquarters at Yafour Hotel has also been further upgraded in accordance with the risk mitigation measures recommended in the United Nations security risk assessment. UNDOF continued its efforts to strengthen its positions and presence in the Mount Hermon area. The infrastructure works and groundworks at positions 12 and 12A continued. Enhancements at United Nations position 80, including additional force protection measures, also continued.

27. As at 12 August 2016, UNDOF comprised 865 troops, including 21 women. Troops are currently deployed from Bhutan (2), Czechia (3), Fiji (301), Finland (2), India (219), Ireland (136), Nepal (200) and the Netherlands (2). In addition, 67 military observers from UNTSO, including 6 female observers, assisted the Force in carrying out its tasks.

III. Implementation of Security Council resolution 338 (1973)

28. In its resolution 2294 (2016), the Security Council called upon the parties concerned to immediately implement its resolution 338 (1973), decided to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a further period of six months, until 31 December 2016, and requested the Secretary-General to report every 90 days on developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement resolution 338 (1973). The search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, in particular the efforts made at various levels to implement resolution 338 (1973), was addressed in my report on the situation in the Middle East (A/71/328), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 70/16 on Jerusalem and 70/17 on the Syrian Golan.

29. Since the discontinuation of indirect peace talks in December 2008, there have been no negotiations between the parties. The Syrian conflict is further reducing the prospects for their resumption and for progress towards peace between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. I look forward to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and the resumption of efforts towards a comprehensive, just and durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions.

IV. Observations

30. I note with concern the serious violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement that have occurred. The continued fighting on the Bravo side between the Syrian armed forces and armed groups, and between different armed groups, including listed terrorist group Nusrah Front, in the southern part of the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side, as well as the firing of missiles by the Israel Defense Forces across the ceasefire line, jeopardize the long-term ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. The developments of 3, 5 and 25 July, and 22 August across the ceasefire line are of deep concern. It remains critical that the parties maintain a liaison with UNDOF in the first instance in order to prevent any escalation of the situation across the ceasefire line. The mandate of UNDOF remains an important element in ensuring the stability of the region. For its part, the United Nations will continue to make efforts to ensure that the long-held ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic continues to hold.

31. I am gravely concerned by the continuing deterioration of the security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, its impact on the Syrian population and its potential implications for the stability of the region. These developments have continued to affect the UNDOF area of operation significantly. The presence of the Syrian armed forces and unauthorized military equipment in the area of separation are violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. The increased use of heavy weapons by the Syrian armed forces and armed groups, including listed terrorist groups, in the continuing Syrian conflict is disturbing. I note that while the reduction in the level of firing continues in the northern part of the UNDOF area of operation, listed terrorist groups and other armed groups continue to maintain control over significant sections of the areas of separation and limitation of the UNDOF area of operation. The established crossing between the Alpha and Bravo sides remains closed.

32. There should be no military forces in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF. I call upon all parties to the Syrian conflict to cease military actions throughout the country, including in the UNDOF area of operation, and to remove all military equipment and all armed personnel from the area of separation.

33. The Israel Defense Forces should refrain from firing across the ceasefire line. The firing of missiles across the ceasefire line by Israel Defense Forces soldiers has the potential to escalate tensions between the two sides. The continued presence of unauthorized weapons and equipment in the area of limitation on the Alpha side is also of concern.

34. I remain concerned about the several incidents that have jeopardized United Nations personnel and facilities. Any hostile act against United Nations personnel, including threatening their physical safety, restricting their movement and direct and indirect firing at United Nations personnel and facilities by anyone, is unacceptable. I reiterate that all military activities in the area of separation conducted by any actor pose a risk to the ceasefire and to the local civilian population, in addition to the United Nations personnel on the ground. I call upon all parties to take all measures necessary to protect civilians.

35. As UNDOF continues to move forward in planning a limited return to Camp Faouar and to intensify its operations in the area of separation, it becomes critical that the safety and security of United Nations personnel be assured. I call upon the

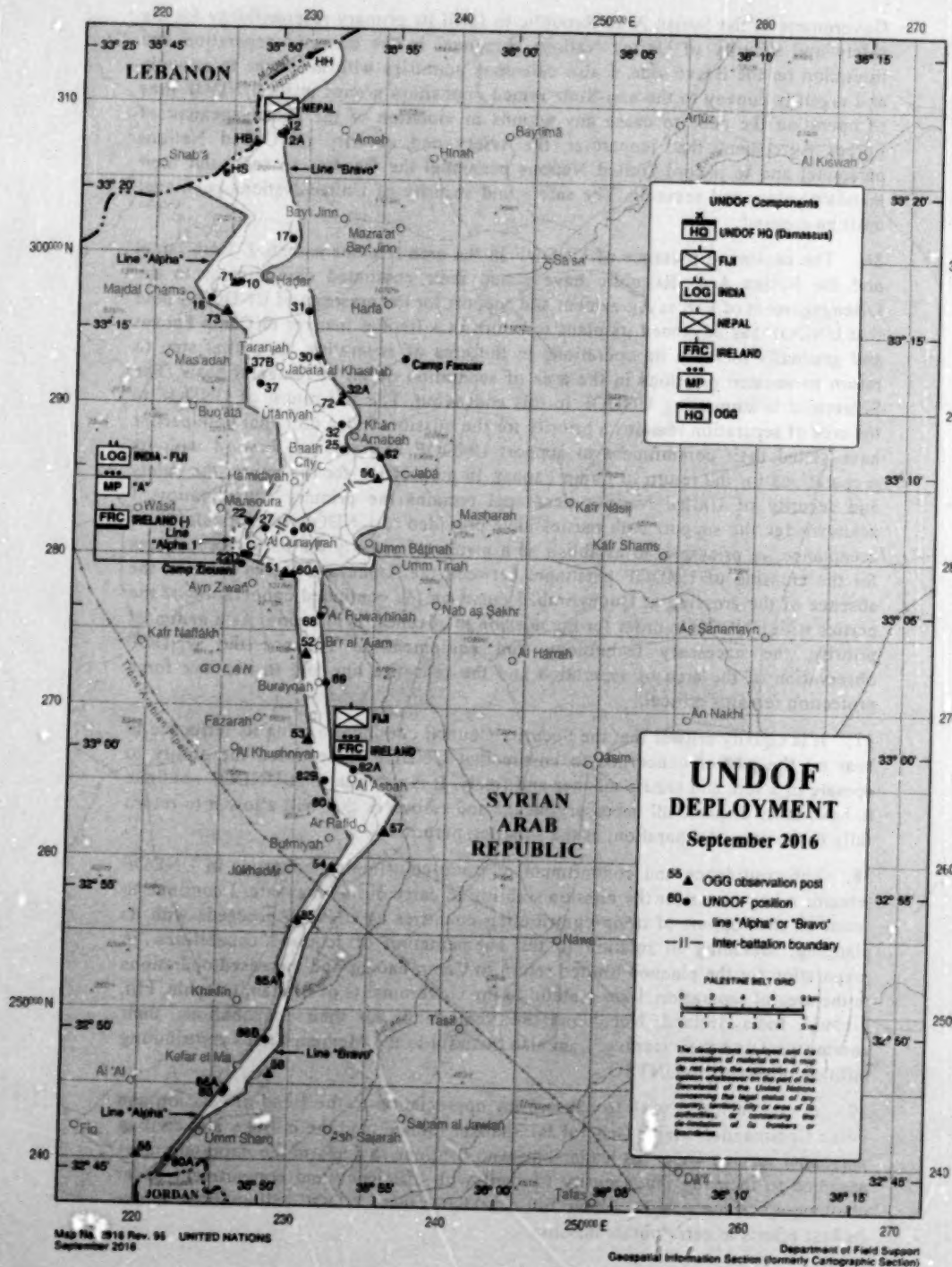
Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to fulfil its primary responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations personnel in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side. I also call upon countries with influence to strongly and urgently convey to the non-State armed opposition groups in the UNDOF area of operation the need to cease any actions in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement that jeopardize the safety and security of United Nations personnel and to accord United Nations personnel the freedom to carry out their mandate safely and securely. The safety and security of United Nations personnel must be ensured.

36. The continued presence of UNDOF in the area remains essential. Both Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic have stated their continued commitment to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and support for the presence of UNDOF. I note that UNDOF has advanced its plans to return in a limited manner to Camp Faouar and gradually increase its operations in the area of separation, as a first step to return to vacated positions in the area of separation on an incremental basis. The Secretariat is supporting UNDOF in this endeavour. The full return of UNDOF to the area of separation remains a priority for the mission. I also note that both parties have stated their commitment to support UNDOF as it moves forward with its preparations for the return to Camp Faouar. In preparation for the return, the safety and security of United Nations personnel remains the primary consideration. I acknowledge the support both parties have provided to UNDOF, in particular their acceptance, in principle, to establish as a matter of priority temporary procedures for the crossing of UNDOF personnel between the Alpha and Bravo sides in the absence of the crossing at Qunaytirah. I count on the continued cooperation of the parties with UNDOF in order for the mission to advance its planning. As a matter of priority, the necessary technology and equipment to enhance the UNDOF observation of the area of separation and the ceasefire line and to improve force protection remains critical.

37. It is equally critical that the Security Council continue to bring its influence to bear on the parties concerned to ensure that UNDOF is accorded the ability to operate in a safe and secure manner and freely. It is essential that UNDOF continue to have at its disposal all necessary means and resources that will allow it to return fully to the area of separation, as the situation permits.

38. The confidence and commitment of troop-contributing countries in UNDOF remains a key factor for the mission's ability to carry out its mandate. I continue to count on the support of troop-contributing countries as UNDOF proceeds with its planning, including in relation to the augmentation of required capabilities, in preparation for the planned limited return to Camp Faouar and increased operations in the area of separation. I am grateful to the Governments of Bhutan, Czechia, Fiji, Finland, India, Ireland, Nepal and the Netherlands for their contributions, their commitment and their resolve. I am also thankful to the Member States contributing military observers to UNTSO.

39. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Jai Shanker Menon, and the military and civilian personnel serving under his leadership, who continue to perform the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council with efficiency and commitment under challenging circumstances. I have full confidence that UNDOF will continue to use its best efforts to carry out its mission.


LEBANON
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
JORDAN
GOLAN
UNDOF Components
HQ UNDOF HQ (Damascus)
FIJI
LOG INDIA
NEPAL
FRC IRELAND
MP
HQ OGG
UNDOF
DEPLOYMENT
September 2016
OGG observation post
UNDOF position
line "Alpha" or "Bravo"
Inter-battalion boundary
Line "Alpha"
Line "Bravo"
Camp Faouar
Camp Ziouani
LOG INDIA - FIJI
MP "A"
FRC IRELAND (-)
Line "Alpha 1"
Map No. 3916 Rev. 95 UNITED NATIONS
September 2016
Department of Field Support
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)

United Nations S/2016/804

Security Council

Distr.: General
23 September 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 21 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward to you information regarding violations of the cessation of hostilities by illegal armed groups in Syria between 12 and 21 September 2016 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

16-16504 (E) 270916 290916

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 21 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Russian]

Summary of violations by illegal armed groups of the cessation of hostilities in Syria

In the period from 12 to 21 September 2016, a total of 347 violations of the cessation of hostilities by fighters from illegal armed groups were recorded.

24-hour period from 19 to 20 September

In Aleppo governorate, terrorists using improvised multiple-launch rocket systems, mortars and small arms fired on the settlement of Hadir and farms in the settlement of Shaykh Ali Qutbani, the neighbourhoods of Ramusah, Zahra', 1070, Ansari, Khalidiyah and Layramun, and the Castello trade centre and road adjacent to it, the cement and gas plants and the artillery school in the city of Aleppo.

In Damascus governorate, the settlements of Hatitat al-Jarash, Harasta, Hawsh Kharabu, Duma, Marj Sultan, a secondary school in the settlement of Jawbar, the Bala al-Qadimah farms and government troop positions near the settlements of Arbil and Qabun were fired upon with improvised multiple-launch rocket systems, mortars and small arms.

Armed units of terrorist groups using improvised multiple-launch rocket systems fired on the settlements of Ma'an, Mubattan and Muraywid in Hama governorate and also on the Tabl fortress and the area at elevation point 409.5 in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

In Qunaytirah governorate, the government troop positions in the area at elevation point 1226 were shelled by tanks and the settlement of Baas was shelled by artillery and mortars.

24-hour period from 18 to 19 September

In Aleppo governorate, illegal armed groups using small arms, improvised multiple-launch rocket systems and mortars fired on the settlement of Shaykh Ali Qutbani and the Aleppo citadel, the neighbourhoods of Ramusah and Zahra', and the cement plant and the Castello trade centre and road in the city of Aleppo.

In Damascus governorate, terrorists fired on the settlements of Harasta, Qabun and Hawsh Kharabu, the neighbourhoods of Hamadani and Abbasiyin, and on government troop positions near the Hamadani neighbourhood in the city of Damascus.

Using improvised multiple-launch rocket systems and mortars, the fighters fired on the settlements of Ma'an in Hama governorate and Atbaa in Dar'a governorate, on the positions of Syrian Armed Forces near Mahruq hill in Hama governorate and on the settlement of Uthman in Dar'a governorate.

The populated areas of Karad Dayasinah, Homs, Kafr al-Abd, Mashrafah and Ard al-Jabburin in Homs governorate, and Rasha, Kinnsibba, Nakhshabba and the Tabl fortress in Ladhiqiyah governorate, were shelled with mortars.

On 17 September at 1700 hours, two F-16 aircraft, two A-10 aircraft and an armed unmanned aerial vehicle of the United States Air Force carried out strikes on government troop positions in the area 6 km south of the Dayr al-Zawr airfield. At 1750 hours, at the request of the Russian Federation, the strikes were halted. At the same time, fighters of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) launched an offensive in that area. In fierce fighting, with the support of the Russian Air Force, the terrorist group's progress was halted. As a result of the United States air strike on Syrian government troop positions, 62 people died, 98 were wounded and 11 pieces of military equipment were destroyed.

Also on 17 September in the neighbourhood of Shaykh Hadir in Aleppo city, gunmen brutally suppressed the spontaneous protests of around 300 civilians, requiring them to flee the city to avoid an intensification of hostilities. According to local residents, the militia shot 26 people, among them 9 teenagers.

24-hour period from 17 to 18 September

In Aleppo governorate, armed units of terrorist groups using home-made multiple launch-rocket systems, mortars and anti-tank missiles systems attacked the farms in Shaykh Ali Qutbani, the Aleppo citadel, the neighbourhoods of Ramusah and Dahiyat-al-Assad, the Castello trade centre, the artillery school, the emergency school and the tannery, as well as the positions of government troops near the neighbourhoods of Ramusah and 1070 in Aleppo city.

In Damascus governorate, mortar rockets attacked the settlements of Jawbar, Harasta, Arbil, Duma and Marj Sultan, the farms in Khan al-Shih, the Abbasiyin neighbourhood and the Ibn al-Walid Hospital in the city of Damascus.

In Hama governorate, terrorists using improvised multiple-launch rocket systems and mortars fired on the settlements of Ma'an and Mu'ardis and on the positions of Syrian Armed Forces near the mountain ranges of Jabal Zayn al-Abidin and Tall Bazzam.

In Dar'a governorate, areas of Dar'a and Uthman settlements were shelled by artillery.

In Ladhiqiyah governorate, terrorists fired mortars at Ayn al-Qantarah, Shir Adaba and the Tabl fortress and at government troop positions near point 1154.

In Homs governorate, the settlements of Ard al-Jabburin and Tasnin were shelled.

24-hour period from 16 to 17 September

In Aleppo governorate, illegal armed groups using improvised multiple-launch rocket systems, mortars and anti-tank missiles fired on farms in the settlement of Shaykh Ali Qutbani and on the neighbourhoods of Zahra', Ramusah, 1070, Dar Minyan, Muhamin, Dahiyat al-Assad, Halab Jadidah, Mashariqah and Layramun,

and the Castello trade centre, the emergency school and the gas and cement plants in the city of Aleppo.

In Damascus governorate, the settlements of Jawbar, Harasta, Hawsh Nasri, Hatitat al-Jarash and Hawsh Harabu, the Ibn al-Walid Hospital and farms in the settlement of Khan al-Shih were shelled with mortars.

In Hama governorate, the settlements of Ma'an, Mahruq, Shajar, Iskandariyah, Hajar and Muhradah, and the airfield in the city of Hama, were shelled with improvised multiple-launch rocket systems and mortars.

Terrorists also fired on the fortress of Shilf and the settlement of Nahshabba in Ladhiqiyah governorate, the neighbourhood of Manshiyah in the city of Dar'a, and the settlement of Jubbata al-Khashab in Qunaytirah governorate.

In Homs governorate, terrorists using multiple-launch rocket systems and mortars fired on the settlement of Tayyibah al-Gharbiyah and the neighbourhood of Bayadah in the city of Homs.

The leadership of the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic wrote to the head of the inter-agency delegation of the United States of America in Geneva, Ambassador Wood, to inform him that the moderate opposition had violated the cessation-of-hostilities agreement. That communication also reported that militia fighters were gathering, and possibly attempting to launch an offensive, in the northern part of Hama governorate. The Russian Federation requested American colleagues to urge opposition leaders not to act rashly, and informed them that the commanders of Syrian government forces would take the necessary measures to respond proportionately in the event of a militia attack.

24-hour period from 15 to 16 September

In Aleppo governorate, terrorists using mortars, multiple-launch rocket systems, anti-tank missiles and small arms fired on the settlements of Burayj al-Rih and Hadir, on the neighbourhoods of Khalidiyah, Zahra', Ramusah, Dahiyat al-Assad, Mashariqah and 1070, and on the cement plant, the gas plant, the artillery school, the checkpoint on the Castello road, the Aleppo citadel and the Castello trade centre in the city of Aleppo.

The settlements of Ma'an, Zawr Abu Zayd, Muhradah and Iskandariyah in Hama governorate were shelled with multiple-launch rocket systems, mortars and armoured vehicles.

Terrorists using mortars and small arms fired on the settlements of Harasta, Hawsh al-Khayyat and Hawsh al-Farah in Damascus governorate and on Ibn al-Walid Hospital in the city of Damascus; on Kinnsibba, Ayn al-Qantarah and Rasha, the Abu Ali mountain range and Shilft fortress in Ladhiqiyah governorate; and the neighbourhood of Abbasiyin in Homs governorate.

The illegal armed groups did not begin withdrawing their vehicles and weapons from the Castello road at the same time as government forces, thus failing to meet their obligations under the Russian-American agreements.

Opposition forces are taking advantage of the ceasefire to rebuild their military capability and to regroup in the governorates of Aleppo, Hama and Homs. This accounts for the increasing number of attacks on their part.

24-hour period from 14 to 15 September

In Aleppo governorate, terrorists using mortars, multiple-launch rocket systems and anti-tank missiles fired on the settlements of Nayrab, Azizi and Binyamin and on the neighbourhoods of Zahra', 1070, Dar al-Mu'allimin, Ansari, Ramusah and Layramun, the cement and gas plants, the Castello trade centre, the Assad Military Academy and the artillery school in the city of Aleppo.

In Hama governorate, the settlements of Ma'an, Muhradah, Kawkab, Mu'ardis and Kumkhanah and the railway station in the settlement of Harbinafsih were shelled with multiple-launch rocket systems and mortars.

The settlements of Qurmus, Tayyibah al-Gharbiyah, Tasnin, Tayr Ma'lah, Kafr Nan, Ard al-Jabburin, Abbasi and Rastan in Homs governorate, the settlements of Harasta, Qasimiyah and Jawbar in Damascus governorate and Ibn al-Walid Hospital in the city of Damascus were shelled with mortars. In Ladhiqiyah governorate, the positions of Syrian Armed Forces were fired upon near point 1154.

24-hour period from 13 to 14 September

In Aleppo governorate, terrorists fired mortars and anti-tank missile systems at the settlements of Shih, Burayj al-Rih, Hadir and Shurfah and at the positions of Syrian Armed Forces near Zahrat Abu Zallam.

In the city of Aleppo, the Ramusah neighbourhood and government troop positions near the Castello trade centre were shelled twice, and mortars were fired at the Ansari neighbourhood three times. The positions of Syrian Armed Forces were also fired upon near the cement factory and the artillery school.

The most devastating impact was caused by the shelling of the Ansari neighbourhood, during which 3 civilians were killed and 7 people injured.

In Hama governorate, militia fired rocket systems and mortars at the settlements of Muhradah, Ma'an, Habit, Kawkab, Achan and Mu'ardis, and twice attacked a Government troop checkpoint near Ard Kawkab.

Illegal armed groups fired mortars at the settlement of Tayr Ma'lah and at the positions of government forces near Tasnin and Wa'r in Homs governorate.

Other settlements subjected to shelling were Baharia, Hawsh Nasri, Harasta and the Khan al-Shih farms in Damascus governorate; Shir-Adaba, Rasha and the area near point 409.5 in Ladhiqiyah governorate; and Khirbat al-Ghazalah and Uthman in Dar'a governorate.

24-hour period from 12 to 13 September

Two violations by armed opposition groups were detected in Ladhiqiyah governorate, where the positions of Syrian Armed Forces near the Abu Ali and Qizil Dagh mountain ranges were fired upon.

The positions of government troops and citizens in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Idlib and Dar'a governorates were fired upon 21 times by the Nusrah Front and ISIL terrorist organizations. Improvised rocket launchers were used to shell the area near the residence of the Governor of Aleppo.

24-hour period from 11 to 12 September

The cessation of hostilities was maintained in most governorates of the Syrian Arab Republic over the 24-hour period. On 11 September, there were 11 violations detected in Damascus and Ladhiqiyah governorates.

Units affiliated with the opposition group Army of Islam fired mortars at the settlements of Duma, Muhammadiyah, Tall al-Kurdi, Nashabiyah, Jawbar, Hawsh Dawrah and Arbil in Damascus governorate.

In Ladhiqiyah governorate, members of Ahrar al-Sham shelled the settlements of Hamrat, Rasha, Abu Ali and the positions of Syrian Armed Forces near point 529.

In the city of Aleppo, terrorists using multiple-launch rocket systems, anti-tank missile systems and mortars shelled the neighbourhoods of Ramusah, Ansari and 1070, the artillery school and the Castello trade centre.

Mortars and grenade launchers were fired at the town of Khirbat al-Ghazalah in Dar'a governorate; at Muhradah and Kawkab in Hama governorate; at Duma, Hawsh Nasri, Qabun and the school medical service of Harasta in Damascus governorate; and at Ibn al-Walid Hospital in the city of Damascus.